

## **Passing the Torch**

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After nearly eight years at the helm of the English Communities Committee of the CSSS des Sommets, the time has come for me to pass the torch. It has been an amazing experience and I am grateful to everyone who has worked with me on the committee, the administration and staff at the CSSS des Sommets, various community groups across the territory, and, of course, Main Street, for having provided me with this forum for reaching out to you since 2006.

Although I will no longer be president of the Committee, I will remain available to its members and all the other players in the health and social services network of the region and will continue to share the knowledge and understanding that I have gained over the years.

This move has been made possible, in large part, thanks to the expansion of services available from 4 Korner's Family Resource Center. Although based in Deux Montagnes, 4 Korner's is the best vehicle the English-speaking communities has for dealing with their needs in their own language. While it provides some direct services, its great strength is in acting as an information and referral centre, and in its constant lobbying of government agencies, service providers and various non-profit groups to ensure that they are aware of the need to provide services in English.

One major initiative that took place last autumn was the opening of a satellite office of 4 Korner's in Ste. Agathe to serve the needs of the population along the axis formed by Route 117. With Kim Nymark filling the position of Communications Director, working out of an office provided by the CSSS des Sommets and located in the premises of the Fondation médicale des Laurentides et des Pays-d'en-Haut in the old Fatima church in Ste. Agathe, you know that you have a strong voice advocating for your rights and needs for health and social services. Among her responsibilities, Kim will act as coordinator of the English Communities Committee.

Kim will also take over writing this column as of next month. The plan is for her to profile a different service provider each month. This will help you to become familiar with the services that are available including the degree of English in which those services are provided. There is a vast and growing list of government agencies, groups and committees working towards your well-being across the Laurentians. Regular readers of Main Street are familiar with some of them, either through this column or through others as well as through feature articles over the years. The services are available, but we often believe that they are available only in French, which is not always the case.

Watch this space over the coming months to learn about services for young children, for seniors, for families, for people with specific health problems, mental as well as physical, and for information about services that are available through the public health system.

It is all very well for you to read about these services, but it is also necessary to become fully engaged in the community if you want it to thrive and prosper. Even talking with your friends and neighbours about these issues is important. Volunteer your time with a group that interests you, or perhaps touches you personally. Share links and forward emails that contain information pertinent to life in the Laurentians. Persuade someone not to go to Montreal or Ontario for a service or treatment that is offered here. The law of supply and demand works if our use of the services demonstrates the demand..

Wishing you all the best of health, and thank you for all your feedback over the years.

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